

Politics – July-August 2009

Great leaders are those who have the ability to assess complicated situations, consolidate efforts for addressing challenges, and fathom when words alone will not suffice.

Raphael Cohen-Almagor

The threat of Iran to world peace is looming. Time is running out. It is now the time for Obama to show from what material he is made. World leadership is required now to avert the unmistakable challenge, before it is too late. We cannot afford idleness.

A substantial part of this Newsletter is dedicated to Operation Cast Lead, as new evidence is appearing, disclosing details as to how the IDF conducted the operation. The findings do not add to Israel's reputation, to say the least.

Free Gilad Shalit. Prime Minister Netanyahu says that he wishes to put an end to this ordeal and to bring Gilad home. Indeed, we see increased negotiations between Israel, Egypt and Hamas. I hope a deal will be confirmed soon. The government should invest in his release. It should be its top priority.



Ynet

Israeli embassies around the world are now showing people reading Gilad's children story, which he wrote when he was 11 year-old. The story, "When the Shark and the Fish First Met" is about co-existence, about living together instead of being enemies.

See children around the world reading Gilad's story:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e0rb_SmjUKc

See also

http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2008/When+the+Shark+and+the+Fish+First+Met+by+Gilad+Shalit.htm

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On July 16, 2009 Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton warned Iran it has only a limited time to accept the Obama administration's offer for engagement. She also urged Arab nations to take immediate steps to improve ties with Israel to bolster Mideast peace hopes.



In a wide-ranging policy address to the Council on Foreign Relations, Clinton said the administration was "appalled" by Iran's recent postelection crackdown on protesters. She said the hard-line regime would face new penalties and increasing isolation over its nuclear program and support for extremists unless it soon took up the U.S. overture. "We remain ready to engage with Iran, but the time for action is now," she said. "The opportunity will not remain open indefinitely."

Clinton did not set a deadline, but President Barack Obama said last week that the U.S. wants to see a positive response by the fall or it will press for additional bilateral and United Nations sanctions. "Neither the president nor I have any illusions that dialogue with the Islamic Republic will guarantee success of any kind and the prospects have certainly shifted in the weeks since the election," Clinton said. "But we also understand the importance of trying to engage Iran and

offering its leaders a clear choice: whether to join the international community as a responsible member or to continue down a path to further isolation."

Source: Associated Press, "Clinton warns Iran on engagement", http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20090715/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/us_clinton_iran_3

Germany's Spies Refuted the 2007 NIE Report

The Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), Germany's foreign intelligence agency, has amassed evidence of a sophisticated Iranian nuclear weapons program that continued beyond 2003. This usually classified information comes courtesy of Germany's highest state-security court.



A special national security panel of the Federal Supreme Court in Karlsruhe cites from a May 2008 BND report, saying the agency "showed comprehensively" that "development work on nuclear weapons can be observed in Iran even after 2003."



Barbara Kelley

According to the judges, the BND supplemented its findings on August 28, 2008, showing "the development of a new missile launcher and the similarities between Iran's acquisition efforts and those of countries with already known nuclear weapons programs, such as Pakistan and North Korea."

It's important to point out that this was no ordinary agency report, the kind that often consists just of open source material, hearsay and speculation. Rather, the BND submitted an "office testimony," which consists of factual statements about the Iranian program that can be proved in a court of law. This is why, in their March 26 opinion, the judges wrote that "a preliminary assessment of the available evidence suggests that at the time of the crime [April to November 2007] nuclear weapons were being developed in Iran." In their May press release, the judges come out even more clear, stating unequivocally that "Iran in 2007 worked on the development of nuclear weapons."

The judges had been asked to consider an appeal in the case of a German-Iranian businessman accused of brokering supplies for Iran's nuclear weapons program. The Federal Prosecutor had charged the defendant, identified by the authorities only as "Mohsen V.," with violating Germany's War Weapons Control Law and the Foreign Trade Act. A lower court in Frankfurt refused to try the case on the grounds that it was unlikely that Iran had a nuclear program at the time of the defendant's activities in 2007, citing the NIE report as evidence.

That's why the Supreme Court judges had to rule first on the question of whether that program exists at all. Having answered that question in the affirmative, the court had to rule next on the likelihood of the defendant to be found guilty in a trial. The supreme court's conclusions are unusually strong.

"The results of the investigation do in fact provide sufficient indications that the accused aided the development of nuclear weapons in Iran through business dealings."

The case sheds light on how these networks function. According to the supreme court judges, the businessman has brokered "industrial machines, equipment and raw materials primarily to Iranian customers," for Iran's nuclear weapons program.

The defendant's business partners in Tehran "dealt with acquiring military and nuclear-related goods for Iran and used various front companies, headquartered for example in Dubai and the United Arab Emirates, to circumvent existing trade restrictions." According to the judges, Mohsen V. also tried to supply to Tehran via front companies in Dubai "Geiger counters for radiation-resistant detectors constructed especially for protection against the effects of nuclear detonations."

Defendant Mohsen V.'s various business contacts in Iran, Russia, Germany, and the Near and Middle East are listed in the prosecutor's files and in the judges' decision. So is information related to the secret supply of "two high-speed cameras needed to develop nuclear warheads. The delivery of the cameras to the final customers in Iran occurred on November 1, 2007 at the latest." The Karlsruhe judges wrote that, by his own admission, Mohsen V. was "aware of the cameras' possible use in the military arena."

The court's decision and the BND's reports raise the question of how, or why, U.S. intelligence officials could have come to the conclusion that Iran suspended its program in 2003. German intelligence officials wonder themselves. BND sources have told me that they have shared their findings and documentation with their U.S. colleagues ahead of the 2007 NIE report -- as is customary between these two allies. It appears the Americans have simply ignored this evidence despite repeated warnings from the BND. This suggests not so much a failure of U.S. intelligence but its sabotage.

Source: *The Wall Street Journal*, July 20, 2009,
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124803669414063037.html>

Amnesty Details Gaza 'War Crimes'

Israel committed war crimes and carried out reckless attacks and acts of wanton destruction in its Gaza offensive, an independent human rights report says. Hundreds of Palestinian civilians were killed using high-precision weapons, while others were shot at close range, the group Amnesty International says. Its report also calls rocket attacks by Palestinian militants war crimes and accuses Hamas of endangering civilians.

The Israeli military says its conduct was in line with international law. Israel has attributed some civilian deaths to "professional mistakes", but has dismissed wider criticism that its attacks were indiscriminate and disproportionate.

Amnesty says some 1,400 Palestinians were killed in the 22-day Israeli offensive between 27 December 2008 and 17 January 2009, which agrees broadly with Palestinian figures.



More than 900 of these were civilians, including 300 children and 115 women, it says. In March, Israel's military said the overall Palestinian death toll was 1,166, of whom 295 were "uninvolved" civilians.

Pattern

The 117-page report by Amnesty International says many of the hundreds of civilian deaths in the conflict "cannot simply be dismissed as 'collateral damage' incidental to otherwise lawful attacks - or as mistakes".

It says "disturbing questions" remain unanswered as to why children playing on roofs and medical staff attending the wounded were killed by "highly accurate missiles" whose operators had detailed views of their targets.

GAZA CIVILIAN DEATHS

- ☑ Children: 300
- ☑ Women: 115
- ☑ Men over 50: 85
- ☑ Civilian men under 50: 200
- ☑ Non-combatant police: 240
- ☑ Total: 940 *Source: Amnesty International*

Lives were lost because Israeli forces "frequently obstructed access to medical care," the report says. It also reiterates previous condemnations of the use of "imprecise" weapons such as white phosphorous and artillery shells.

The destruction of homes, businesses and public buildings was in many cases "wanton and deliberate" and "could not be justified on the grounds of military necessity", the report adds.

"All of those things occurred on a scale that constitutes pattern - and constitutes war crimes," Donatella Rovera, who headed the research, told the BBC.

The document also gives details of several cases where it says people - including women and children posing no threat to troops - were shot at close range as they were fleeing their homes in search of shelter.

Israeli officials responded saying the military targeted only areas where Palestinian militants were operating, and accused Hamas of turning civilian neighbourhoods into "war zones".

"We tried to be as surgical as is humanly possible in a difficult combat situation," Israeli government spokesman Mark Regev told the BBC.

Human shields

The Amnesty report says no evidence was found that Palestinian militants had forced civilians to stay in buildings being used for military purposes, contradicting Israeli claims that Hamas repeatedly used "human shields".

However, Amnesty says Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups had endangered Palestinian civilians by firing rockets from residential neighbourhoods and storing weapons in them.

It says local residents had in one case told researchers that Hamas fighters had fired a rocket from the yard of a government school.

The Israeli military has repeatedly blamed Hamas for causing civilian casualties, saying its fighters operated from buildings like schools, medical facilities, religious institutions, residential homes and commercial premises.

In the cases it had investigated, Amnesty said civilian deaths "could not be explained as resulting from the presence of fighters shielding among civilians, as the Israeli army generally contends".

However, Amnesty does accuse Israel of using civilians, including children, as human shields in Gaza, forcing them to remain in houses which its troops were using as military positions, and to inspect sites suspected of being booby trapped.

It also says Palestinian militants rocket fire from the Gaza Strip was "indiscriminate and hence unlawful under international law", although it only rarely caused civilian casualties.

Hamas leader in Gaza Ismail Haniya declined to comment on the Amnesty International criticism, but said: "We believe the leaders of the occupation state must be tried for these crimes."

Thirteen Israelis were killed, including three civilians, during the offensive, which Israel launched with the declared aim of curtailing cross-border rocket attacks.

Story from BBC NEWS:
http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/middle_east/8128210.stm

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Report on Gaza

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the international relief activities conducted by the Movement in situations of conflict. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.



Established in 1863, the ICRC is at the origin of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The ICRC has recently published a report on life in Gaza. As you can read from the main findings infra, the life of Gazans is pretty miserable. I am not seeking people to blame, and it might not be that important for the Gazans at present, as they desperately need relief and concrete help. I sincerely hope that the Gaza leaders will put their priorities right: health,

housing, education, infrastructure, welfare. That's enough. If they will be preoccupied with these hefty tasks, their hands will be full for the foreseeable future, and resources will not find their way to other causes (terrorism). Israel, and the international community at large, could not provide the much-needed relief at the expense of the Gaza government. The responsibility lies, squarely and rightly, with Hamas. Here are the main, most troubling, findings:

Six months after Israel launched its three-week military operation in Gaza on December 27, 2008, Gazans still cannot rebuild their lives. Most people struggle to make ends meet. Seriously ill patients face great difficulty obtaining the treatment they need. Many children suffer from deep psychological problems. Civilians whose homes and belongings were destroyed during the conflict are unable to recover.

During the 22 days of the Israeli military operation, nowhere in Gaza was safe for civilians. Hospitals were overwhelmed with casualties, including small children, women and elderly people. Medical personnel showed incredible courage and determination, working around the clock to save lives in extremely difficult circumstances. Meanwhile, daily rocket attacks launched from Gaza put thousands of residents at risk in southern Israel. Medical workers in Israel provided care for the traumatized population and treated and evacuated casualties. Many people in Gaza lost a child, a parent, another relative or a friend. Israel's military operation left thousands of homes partly or totally destroyed. Whole neighbourhoods were turned into rubble. Schools, kindergartens, hospitals and fire and ambulance stations were damaged by shelling.

This small coastal strip is cut off from the outside world. Even before the latest hostilities, drastic restrictions on the movement of people and goods imposed by the Israeli authorities, particularly since October 2007, had led to worsening poverty, rising unemployment and deteriorating public services such as health care, water and sanitation. Insufficient cooperation between the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah and the Hamas administration in Gaza had also hit the provision of essential services. As a result, the people of Gaza were already experiencing a major crisis affecting all aspects of daily life when hostilities intensified in late December. Six months later, restrictions on imports are making it impossible for Gazans to rebuild their lives. The quantities of goods now entering Gaza fall well short of what is required to meet the population's needs. In May 2009, only 2,662 truckloads of goods entered Gaza from Israel, a decrease of almost 80 per cent compared to the 11,392 truckloads allowed in during April 2007, before Hamas took over the territory.

Gaza neighbourhoods particularly hard hit by the Israeli strikes will continue to look like the epicentre of a massive earthquake unless vast quantities of cement, steel and other building materials are allowed into the territory for reconstruction. Until that happens, thousands of families who lost everything will be forced to live in cramped conditions with relatives. Others will continue to live in tents, as they have nowhere else to go. Emergency repairs carried out after the military operation have made it possible to restore water and sanitation services, but only to the already unsatisfactory level prevailing before December 2008. The infrastructure is overloaded and remains subject to breakdown. Although chlorine is used to disinfect the water, the risk of sewage and other waste matter seeping into the water supply network represents a major threat to public health.

Every day, 69 million litres of partially treated or completely untreated sewage – the equivalent of 28 Olympic-size swimming pools – are pumped directly into the Mediterranean because they cannot be treated.

One of the gravest consequences of the closure is soaring unemployment, which reached 44 per cent in April 2009, according to the Gaza Chamber of Commerce. Restrictions on imports and exports of goods imposed since June 2007 have shut down 96% of industrial operations in Gaza,

with the loss of about 70,000 jobs. This has also had a severe impact on the capacity to export products to Israel and the West Bank, which has become almost impossible. The tunnels under the Egypt-Gaza border do not present an alternative route to economic development and are not ensuring a sufficient supply of affordable goods for the population. The collapse of the Gaza economy has led to a dramatic increase in poverty. An ICRC household survey conducted in May 2008 showed that, even then, over 70 per cent of Gazans were living in poverty, with monthly incomes of less than 250 US dollars for a family of 7 to 9 members (1 dollar per household member per day, excluding the value of humanitarian assistance which they may receive). Up to 40 per cent of Gaza families are very poor; with a monthly income of under 120 dollars (0.5 dollar per household member per day). On average, each person who does work – whether as a paid employee or running their own business – has to support their immediate family of 6-7 people and a few members of their extended family. This increase in poverty has taken a heavy toll on the population's diet. Many families have been forced to cut household expenses to survival levels. Generally, people are getting the calories they need, but only a few can afford a healthy and balanced diet. Poor families often substitute cheaper alternatives such as cereals, sugar and oil for fruits, vegetables, meat and fish. For tens of thousands of children, this has resulted in deficiencies in iron, vitamin A and vitamin D. The likely consequences include stunted growth of bones and teeth, difficulty in fighting off infections, fatigue and a reduced capacity to learn. Most of the very poor have exhausted their coping mechanisms. Many have no savings left. They have sold private belongings such as jewellery and furniture and started to sell productive assets including farm animals, land, fishing boats or cars used as taxis. They are unable to reduce spending on food any further. The declining living standards will affect the health and well-being of the population in the long term. Those worst affected are likely to be children, who make up more than half of Gaza's population.

Source: ICRC, *Gaza – 1.5 Million People Trapped in Despair* (June 2009)

Soldiers' Testimonials

A group of Israeli soldiers who took part in Cast Lead say widespread abuses were committed against civilians under "permissive" rules of engagement. The troops said they had been urged to fire on any building or person that seemed suspicious and said civilians were sometimes used as human shields. Breaking the Silence, a campaign group made up of Israeli soldiers, gathered anonymous accounts from 26 soldiers. "We were told soldiers were to be secured by fire-power. The soldiers were made to understand that their lives were the most important, and that there was no way our soldiers would get killed for the sake of leaving civilians the benefit of the doubt," said one soldier in the report. "People were not instructed to shoot at everyone they see, but they were told that from a certain distance when they approach a house, no matter who it is - even an old woman - take them down," said another.



According to testimonies from the 14 conscripts and 12 reserve soldiers:

- Rules of engagement were either unclear or encouraged soldiers to do their utmost to protect their own lives whether or not Palestinian civilians were harmed.
- Civilians were used as human shields, entering buildings ahead of soldiers

- Large swathes of homes and buildings were demolished. Accounts say that this was often done because the houses might be booby-trapped, or cover tunnels. Testimony mentioned a policy referred to as "the day after", whereby areas near the border were razed to make future military operations easier
- Some of the troops had a generally aggressive, ill-disciplined attitude
- There was incidents of vandalism of property of Palestinians
- Soldiers fired at water tanks because they were bored, at a time of severe water shortages for Gazans
- White phosphorus was used in civilian areas in a way some soldiers saw as gratuitous and reckless
- Many of the soldiers said there had been very little direct engagement with Palestinian militants

The report says Israeli troops and the people who justify their actions are "slid[ing] together down the moral slippery slope".

"This is an urgent call to Israeli society and its leaders to sober up and investigate anew the results of our actions," Breaking the Silence says.

Israel said the purpose of the 22-day operation that ended on 18 January 2009 had been to end rocket fire from Gaza aimed at its southern towns.

Palestinian rights groups say about 1,400 Palestinians died during the operation. Thirteen Israelis died in the conflict, including 10 soldiers serving in Gaza.

According to the UN, the campaign damaged or destroyed more than 50,000 homes, 800 industrial properties, 200 schools, 39 mosques and two churches.

Investigations

Reacting to the report, Israeli military spokeswoman Lt Col Avital Leibovich said:

"The IDF [Israel Defence Forces] regrets the fact that another human rights organisation has come out with a report based on anonymous and general testimony - without investigating their credibility." She dismissed the document as "hearsay and word of mouth".

"The IDF expects every soldier to turn to the appropriate authorities with any allegation," Lt Col Leibovich added. "This is even more important where the harm is to non-combatants. The IDF has uncompromising ethical values which continue to guide us in every mission."

There have been several investigations into the conduct of Israel's operation in Gaza, and both Israel and Hamas, the Palestinian militant group that runs the territory, have faced accusations of war crimes.

An internal investigations by the Israeli military said troops fought lawfully, although errors did take place, such as the deaths of 21 people in a house that had been wrongly targeted.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has requested more than \$11m (£7m) in compensation from Israel for damage to UN property in Gaza. A limited UN inquiry blamed Israel in six out of nine attacks on UN facilities, resulting in casualties among civilians sheltering there.

Meanwhile, a fact-finding team commissioned by the Arab League concluded there was enough evidence to prosecute the Israeli military for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and that "the Israeli political leadership was also responsible for such crimes". It also said Palestinian militants were guilty of war crimes in their use of indiscriminate rocket attacks on civilians.

Source: BBC News (July 15, 2009)

Drop in Terror Attacks

Shin Bet figures indicate volume of attacks is continuing to drop in months after Operation Cast Lead. Ynet reported: "Not a single Israeli citizen was wounded in a terror attack within Israel or the territories over the course of June 2009, a first for 2009". Now, compare this refreshing statement to whatever is the situation in your country and start fathoming the abnormality of living in Israel.

According to the figures, January (the month of the IDF's extensive operation against Hamas in Gaza) saw no less than 580 terror-related attacks. In February and March the numbers dropped to around 120 a month.



Most of the incidents in the West Bank were less elaborate than those on the Gaza border, youths hurling Molotov cocktails or rocks at vehicles rather than organized terror groups launching Qassam rockets and mortar shells, planting explosive devices near the border, anti-tank fire, and small-arms fire.

In April there were 69 terror-related incidents, and in May there were 51. During these months there was an average of 10-20 Qassam rocket attacks from Gaza.

In June the numbers dropped even further, with a record-low of 38 incidents – 22 in the West Bank and 16 in Gaza.

"We see this as an achievement," said a military official, "particularly the fact that there were no casualties on our side, but we must not succumb to complacency because the terror groups are still highly motivated to carry out attacks. So the troops' efforts must continue." The official said that terror groups in Gaza have an interest in only lowering the volume of attacks rather than stopping them completely. In the West Bank he attributed to the drop to the IDF's activity as well as the calm in Palestinian areas.

Source: Hanan Greenberg, "Drop in terror attacks continues, 38 in June from 580 in January", *YNET* (July 6, 2009).

Chaim Ramon Retires from Politics

In July, Chaim Ramon announced his retirement from Israeli politics, and resigned from the Knesset. After so many years, serving as a mere MK is not appealing to him. Indeed, the change from serving as Deputy Prime Minister to a member of the opposition is nothing to report home.



In the early 1980s I was a member of the Young Labour Party in Tel Aviv. Elections were approaching and the Tel Aviv branch convened to decide its representatives on the party's list. Some four hundred people gathered in the Beilinson House. I have never seen so many people there on one afternoon. Everyone wanted to have a voice; many wanted to have a chance to be on the list. I arrived some 30 minutes prior the start of the meeting and positioned myself strategically on the main floor. People who arrived on time had to find a spot on another floor. The house filled with energy, not all positive, with yearnings, with boiling desires. It was one big contest. A mess. I was thinking to myself: What a hell. How will it be possible to decide on anything in such heated atmosphere, where everyone is thinking only about his/her partisan interest? What a nightmare. I concluded it was mission impossible. I was wrong.

About fifteen minutes after the scheduled start of the meeting, the National Chairperson of Young Labour arrived. As usual, in his nonchalant way he wore blue shirt, blue jeans and sandals. At the front of the large room there was a table. He sat on it. He had one advantage over the 400 people: a microphone. Ramon, single-handedly, conducted the meeting in the usual democratic spirit of the Labour Party. He arrived with a note containing names of people. After some ninety minutes, he left with the same note, approved by 400 emotional people who were manipulated magnificently and skillfully by the Chairman. I learned one of most impressive lessons in politics. This was a conclusive show of an astute politician. I had no doubt Ramon would go far and high. I have been following his career ever since.

Ramon never hid his intentions to become prime minister of Israel. At a young age, he was confident of his abilities to do the job. I never underestimated his capabilities to serve the country. He is one of the most able politicians in the history of young Israel. Every contender in the past twenty years would have loved to have Chaim Ramon at his or her side. Many, indeed, had him for periods of time (Peres, Rabin, Sharon, Olmert, Livni). For complex reasons, he did not make it, yet. But if the future will give him a chance, Ramon will return. He will return only for a senior post, as he exhausted all minor and middle-of-the-road roles in Israeli politics. As he grows older, his main vice, women, will be tamed and Chaim will become more focused. I assume now he will going into business to make some money. Good Luck. Have fun. We will see you in due course.

Barack Obama's Mistakes

Obama is not a mediocre person, hence nothing about his administration is mediocre. His term in office will go down in history as a glorious success, or a miserable failure. To avoid the latter, Obama needs to amend two aspects of his conduct.



First, people don't have much appreciation for common things. Obama burns himself by his frequent media appearances. He should give people time to miss him. Quickly, Obama turns from gem into stone. We see far too much of him. We hear too much of him. He is all over the place. It is rare to open the television and not see him speaking. Sometimes, we see him commenting on different subjects a few times in a day. Obama is becoming common commodity. Soon, we will cease to perceive him as president. He will become a common celebrity: An African American masculine version of Paris Hilton. I am surprised that Obama's media experts allow him such frequent appearances. People may start asking: How does he find time for so many media appearances? Doesn't he suppose to do, to create, to initiate, to respond instead of telling the public what he does? Why does he have spokespersons, if he prefers to do the job himself? My candid advice to you, Mr. President: Do your job and let others explain what you are doing. Make your media appearances a rare experience, something that the people should look for.

Second, Obama is facing hard challenges and he has to make hard choices. It seems he does not know how to make choices, hence does everything at the same time. This is not very prudent. Obama has more than three years in office. What's the rush? Why opening so many fronts at the same time, evoking powerful oppositions that might stifle your work? GM, ecology, banking, health. Obama is going against strong lobbies in the Capitol. And I did not mention external challenges: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, the Middle East, North Korea, Al Qaeda, to mention a few. We say in Hebrew, "One cow after the other". Do one thing, complete it to your satisfaction; then move on to the next item on the agenda. Presidency may resemble a marathon, not a collection of simultaneous short runs. The president should have long breath, and cultivate his patience. Otherwise, again, he might burn himself.

Record Rise in UK anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitic attacks in the UK doubled in the first half of this year compared with the same period in 2008. The Jewish Community Security Trust, which monitors anti-Semitism, says it recorded 609 incidents between January and June - up from 276 last year. Most incidents were abusive behaviour, but there were also 77 violent acts.

The trust said the rise had been driven by anger over Israel's military campaign against Hamas in Gaza. That conflict, between December 2008 and January 2009, was followed by an almost immediate rise in anti-Semitic incidents in the UK.

According to the CST, the total number of incidents for the first six months of this year was worse than the previous record of 598 incidents for the whole of 2006. Some 286 incidents occurred in January alone - but the security body said that a disproportionately higher monthly number of attacks and abuse continued into the spring.



The attacks recorded so far include 77 acts of physical violence and two life-threatening assaults, one of which was an attempt to run somebody over with a car.

The CST says there have also been 400 incidents of general abuse, including hate mail to synagogues, along with 62 attacks on property that can be clearly defined as having a religious role.

Earlier this year, Muslim leaders issued a joint statement denouncing anti-Semitism, amid fears that violent elements from within their own communities were responsible for the increase in attacks. Cohesion minister Shahid Malik, one of two Muslims in government, said: "This rise in anti-Semitism is not just concerning for the British Jewish communities but for all those who see themselves as decent human beings.

"The fight against anti-Semitism is a fight that should engage us all. This country will not tolerate those who seek to direct hatred towards any part of our community.

"It may be legitimate for individuals to criticise or be angry at the actions of the Israel government but we must never allow this anger to be used to justify anti-Semitism."

Story from BBC NEWS:
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/uk/8166173.stm>

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Freedom of the Press 2009 Survey

Freedom of the Press 2009 identifies the greatest threats to independent media in 195 countries and territories. Released in advance of World Press Freedom Day May 3, the report shows a seventh straight year of decline in global media freedom, with twice as many losses than gains. There are particularly worrisome trends in East Asia, the former Soviet Union and the Middle East and North Africa. Given an economic climate that is certain to further strain media sustainability and diversity in rich and poor countries alike, pressures on media freedom are increasingly threatening the considerable gains of the past quarter century.



"The journalism profession today is up against the ropes and fighting to stay alive, as pressures from governments, other powerful actors and the global economic crisis take an enormous toll," said Jennifer Windsor, Freedom House executive director. "The press is democracy's first defense and its vulnerability has enormous implications for democracy if journalists are not able to carry out their traditional watchdog role."

There were some notable improvements. The Maldives made the study's largest jump, moving to the Partly Free category with the adoption of a new constitution protecting freedom of expression and the release of a prominent journalist from life imprisonment. Guyana regained its Free rating with fewer attacks on journalists and a government decision to lift a boycott on advertising in the main independent newspaper.

Out of the 195 countries and territories covered in the study, 70 (36 percent) are rated Free, 61 (31 percent) are rated Partly Free and 64 (33 percent) are rated Not Free. This represents a

modest decline from the 2008 survey in which 72 countries and territories were Free, 59 Partly Free and 64 Not Free. The new survey found that only 17 percent of the world's population lives in countries that enjoy a Free press.

Key regional findings include:

- **Asia Pacific:** Cambodia dropped to Not Free status because of increased violence against journalists. Hong Kong slipped to Partly Free as Beijing exerted growing influence over media. China's media environment remained bleak. Media in Taiwan faced assault and growing government pressure. South Asia saw improvements in the Maldives, Bangladesh and Pakistan, while Sri Lanka and Afghanistan suffered setbacks.
- **Central and Eastern Europe/Former Soviet Union:** The region suffered the biggest drop in press freedom of any region, with journalists murdered in Bulgaria and Croatia and assaulted in Bosnia. Russia's score declined with the judiciary unwilling to protect journalists from attacks, as well as the frequent targeting of independent media by regulators.
- **Middle East and North Africa:** The region continues to have the world's lowest level of press freedom. Restrictions on journalists and official attempts to influence coverage during the Gaza conflict led to Israel's Partly Free status. The Israeli-Occupied Territories/Palestinian Authority saw declines with both Hamas and Fatah intimidating journalists. Iraq saw the security environment for journalists improve and new legal protections for media in the Kurdish areas.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa:** Press freedom suffered in Senegal with an increase in both legal and extralegal action taken against media. In Madagascar, media outlets critical of the government were targeted. Other declines were seen in Botswana, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Lesotho, Mauritania, South Africa and Tanzania. Comoros, Sierra Leone, Angola and Liberia improved.
- **Americas:** Guyana regained its Free rating, while Haiti and Uruguay saw significant improvement. However, Mexico's score dropped again because of increased violence, the government's unwillingness to make legal reforms, and pressure on media from local and state officials. Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Nicaragua registered major declines.
- **Western Europe:** The region continues to boast the world's highest level of press freedom. However, Italy slipped back into the Partly Free category with free speech limited by courts and libel laws, increased intimidation of journalists by organized crime and far-right groups, and concerns over the concentration of media ownership. Greece also suffered a significant decline.

Freedom House has assessed the degree of print, broadcast and internet freedom in every country in the world since 1980. The 2009 ratings are based on an assessment of the legal, political and economic environments in which journalists worked in 2008.

"The declines in East Asia are particularly disappointing, given the increased attention on the region because of the Beijing Olympics," said Karin Deutsch Karlekar, Freedom House senior researcher and managing editor of the study. "China should have had a better record in 2008 and upheld its promise to ensure press freedom during the Olympics, but instead it chose to remain the world's largest repressor of media freedom."

Key trends that led to numerical movements in the study include:

- **Fragile Freedoms:** Declines in Israel, Italy and Taiwan illustrate that established democracies with traditionally open media are not immune to restricting media freedom. Over the last five years, a number of emerging democracies have also suffered considerable declines in press freedom including: Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Thailand, the Philippines and Senegal.
- **Consolidating Control:** Authoritarian states are increasingly consolidating control of the media. In the last five years, space for independent media shrunk significantly in countries like Russia, Ethiopia and The Gambia.
- **Violence and Impunity:** The level of violence and physical harassment directed at the press by both government and non-state actors continues to rise in many countries. Many of

these cases go unsolved and these attacks have a chilling effect on media, contributing to self-censorship.

- **Punitive laws:** Both governments and private individuals continue to restrict media freedom through laws that forbid "inciting hatred," commenting on sensitive topics such as religion or ethnicity, or "endangering national security." Libel and defamation laws remain a widespread way to punish the press.
- **New media:** Freedom House's recently released [internet freedom index](#) finds that new media outlets are often freer than traditional media and have the potential to open repressive media environments such as China and Iran. However, as new media gains influence, governments are beginning to crack down on internet users by employing traditional means of repression.

The world's worst-rated countries continue to include Burma, Cuba, Eritrea, Libya, North Korea and Turkmenistan. The study found that the level of media freedom in these countries remained stagnant in 2008, despite hope that the internet and new media might provide openings in the media environment.

The methodology and graphics from the survey are available by contacting Laura Ingalls at ingalls@freedomhouse.org or by calling +1-202-683-0909.

Sources: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=470>

<http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=70&release=811>

Global Corruption Barometer 2009

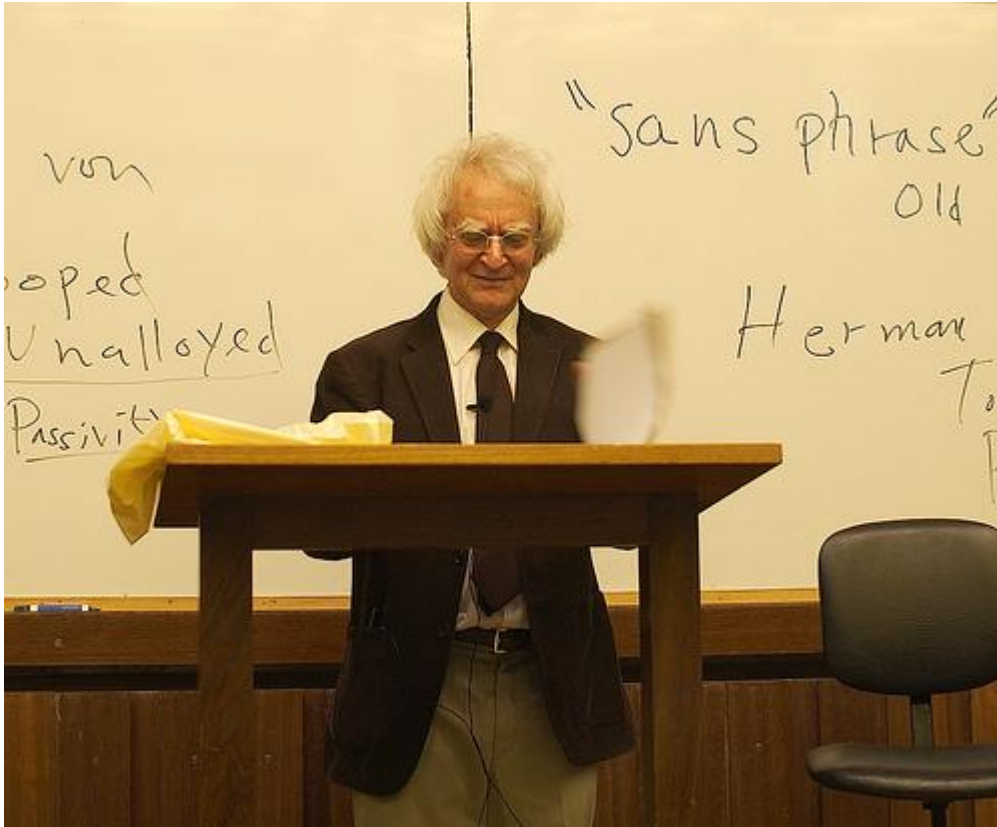
Transparency International's 2009 Global Corruption Barometer reveals a growing distrust of business, the daily struggle of the world's poor with petty bribery and public unconvinced of governments' anti-corruption efforts.



A global public opinion survey, the 2009 Barometer reflects the views of more than 73,000 people from 69 countries and territories around the world.

You can download the full report at http://www.transparency.org/news_room/in_focus/2009/gcb2009#dnld

Jerry Cohen (April 14, 1941 - August 5, 2009)



I was saddened to hear of the sudden death of Jerry Cohen, Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory at the University of Oxford. In 1984 Cohen was elected to the Chichele Professorship and took up the chair in early 1985. He was elected to the British Academy also that year. Cohen's 24-year tenure gave a distinctive cast to Oxford political theory, emphasising its connections with contemporary moral philosophy, in contrast to the more historical and institutional style of the Cambridge of Quentin Skinner and John Dunn. Cohen was celebrated as the leading light of "Analytical Marxism," an attempt to examine Marx's own arguments and subject them to the rigour of the analytical philosophy developed in the 20th century.

When I arrived at Oxford in 1987, Jerry was one of the first to welcome me with his usual big smile and a tap on my back. He taught Hobbes in a way that I never knew before, highlighting his many contributions to philosophy at large and to liberalism in particular. But Marx, of course, was his hero. Jerry's view of philosophy, politics and life was Marxist-egalitarian. In the late 1980s, "the" show in town was "star wars". This is the term Oxford students coined to describe the post-graduate seminars at the All Souls Old Library. Usually, there were three people in the seminar: Jerry Cohen, Ronnie Dworkin, and a rotating philosopher who acted, in the main, as a mediator, peace-maker, mitigator between Jerry and Ronnie. The students were the audience. The relatively small room was packed with people, who often did not find empty seats, thus sat on the window benches, sometimes on the floor. For four years, I hardly missed the best show in town. I would attend each and every seminar, rain or shine, sometime when I was in poor health and should have stayed at home, recovering from the seasonal flu. I would drag myself up the stairs, trying to focus on the sophisticated arguments. Jerry hated to lose an argument to Ronnie. Later, he would continue to reflect on the debate, in private.

Jerry was shrewd, witty, knotty and funny. He could move bluntly and swiftly from a highly serious mode, to a joking mode. You needed to be alert and focus with him to follow his intentions. I remember thinking: God, I would not have liked to be his teacher when he was a boy.

Jerry and I kept in touch after I left Oxford. I enjoyed the lengthy luncheons at All Souls. First, his office, lunch at the small hall (the food is English – nothing to report home), followed by the spacious SCR, and back to Jerry's office/room. In 1997, he kindly arranged for my family All Souls accommodation when we came on a British Council Fellowship. Jerry had keen interest in Israel. He was one of the first subscribers to my blog, back in 2000. He also loved to speak Yiddish, which to my shame I do not understand. He tried to teach me some phrases, to put me in the business, with little success. I recall a long conversation about India, a country which fascinated both of us, but both dreaded to visit. Jerry finally went, upon an invitation he could not decline, and then wrote a fairly substantive manuscript about his experience which he was happy to share with me. I don't think he had ever published his Indian memoirs. Maybe now is the time.

Jerry received many invitations from the best universities in the world. He went on lecture tours, but did not wish to leave Oxford. He grew to like the old-fashioned city with the "funny" costumes that at first looked very strange to the middle-class Jew from Montreal. Slowly he bonded with the city, the university, and its people, and like his mentor Isaiah Berlin, saw Oxford as his home.

Jerry authored *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defense* (1978, 2000); *History, Labour, and Freedom* (1988); *Self-Ownership, Freedom, and Equality* (1995); *If You're an Egalitarian, How Come You're So Rich?* (2000); *Rescuing Justice and Equality* (2008); *Why Not Socialism?* (2009).

My sincere condolences to Jerry's wife, Michèle. Shelo tedei od deava.

See Obituaries: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/obituaries/article6790514.ece>
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/professor-jerry-cohen-maverick-philosopher-who-subjected-marxism-to-the-rigours-of-analytical-philosophy-1770667.html>

EUROPEAN JOURNALISM-FELLOWSHIPS in BERLIN

Journalists from across Europe and the United States are invited to apply for the European Journalism-Fellowships, offered by the International Center for Journalism at Freie Universität Berlin. Participants are given the opportunity to take a two-semester leave from their professional positions and spend a sabbatical year of research at Freie Universität Berlin, widening their knowledge while pursuing a major research project. At the same time, the programme enables participants to network with professional colleagues from Eastern and Western Europe and the United States. The programme starts in October 2010 and ends in July 2011. Highly qualified journalists in either staff positions or freelance employment with several years of professional experience are eligible to apply.



The most important element of the fellowship application is an exposé for a **scientific-journalistic research project** to be pursued in Berlin. Applications can be submitted in German or in English. Written proof certifying good knowledge of the German language is required for participation (e.g. Goethe-Institut, German Academic Exchange Service).

The closing **deadline for applications** is **November 1, 2009** for all scholarships.

Junior Fellowship: for journalists from Central and Eastern Europe with about five years of professional experience. Junior Fellows receive a monthly stipend of 800 up to 1,000 Euros for the duration of ten months.

Standard Fellowship: endowed with a monthly stipend of between 1,100 and 1,500 Euros – depending on the level of professional experience (at least 5 years) for the duration of ten months.

Superior Fellowship of the Berlin State Parliament Foundation:

One outstanding journalist with a PhD degree from one of the former Allied Nations of the Second World War (CIS-States, France, Great Britain, and USA) may be awarded an extraordinary scholarship from the Berlin State Parliament Foundation. The Scholarship includes a monthly stipend of 1,300 Euros plus accommodation for the duration of 12 months. Applicants must submit required documents in German: application form, CV and an exposé for the research project. In addition, applicants must submit a **review of their exposé** by an expert scientist or professor (in German or English).

About the European Journalism-Fellowships:

The European Journalism-Fellowships are funded by renowned media enterprises and foundations in cooperation with Freie Universität Berlin. Current sponsors include the Federal Foreign Office, the FAZIT-Foundation (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung), Helsingin Sanomat Foundation and the Foundation Presse-Haus NRZ, as well as four major political foundations: Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation, Hanns-Seidel-Foundation, Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation, and Heinrich-Böll-Foundation.

Since 1999, 117 journalists from 30 nations have benefited from the opportunity to spend a sabbatical year of research in Berlin. Over the years, a close alumni network of journalists in Europe has emerged. So, the programme European Journalism-Fellowships of the International Center for Journalism at Freie Universität Berlin has established itself as an important institution for journalists at the European level. For the future of European integration, especially the convergence of Eastern and Western Europe, it will be increasingly important for journalists to have specific knowledge about their neighbouring countries, to have international contacts, and to become versed in different cultures. Our aim is to support the professional and personal development of journalists in this spirit.

For more detailed information and application form please contact:

Europäische Journalisten-Fellowships Internationales Journalisten-Kolleg
 Freie Universität Berlin
 Otto-von-Simson-Str. 3
 14195 Berlin
 Germany
 Telephone: ++49 / (0)30 / 838 - 533 15
 Telefax: ++49 / (0)30 / 838 - 533 05
 Internet: www.ejf.fu-berlin.de
 E-mail: ejf@zedat.fu-berlin.de

The IHRT Robert H. Jackson Prize for Human Rights



The IHRT Robert H. Jackson Prize for Human Rights will be awarded for human rights work from 2008-2009. The IHRT is now accepting open nominations to an organisation or individual who you think should be honored. The nominees will be presented in the fall session. Organisations or individuals directly connected to any commissioner will not be considered. You have until September 15th to submit your nominees. You may send your choice to mail@internationalhumanrightstribunal.ning.com.

See <http://internationalhumanrightstribunal.org/robertjacksonprize.aspx>

Visit International Human Rights Tribunal at:
<http://internationalhumanrightstribunal.ning.com>

World Youth Movement Announces 2009 Global Essay Contest

The World Youth Movement for Democracy (World Youth Movement) is seeking submissions for its 6th annual Global Essay Contest, which focuses on young people's perspectives on and engagement with democracy as a way to connect them to larger democracy movements. Through the contest, the World Youth Movement also hopes to demonstrate that there are fundamental characteristics of democracy that have the potential to cross cultures. There will be 15 regional winners on the regional level who will be awarded all-expenses paid opportunities to participate in the 6th Assembly of the World Movement for Democracy in Jakarta, Indonesia next year. Submissions are due September 15, 2009, and regional winners will be announced on World Youth Day for Democracy, October 18, 2009. The Global Essay Contest is generously sponsored by the Hurford Foundation based in New York City.



For more information, go to: www.wymd.org/contests.html

To see the World Youth Movement's recently redesigned Web site, go to: www.wymd.org

KNIGHT FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME SEEKS APPLICANTS

The International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) is now taking applications for its Knight International Journalism Fellowships programme, which recognises outstanding journalists who have demonstrated leadership qualities with at least 10 years experience in the profession. Successful fellows will be placed in Indonesia, Malaysia, Malawi, Senegal and Mozambique for a minimum of one year. In Indonesia, the fellow is expected to launch a digital media association

and create a code of ethics for online journalists while in Malaysia, the fellow will integrate a citizen journalism network into a digital newsroom.



To apply for a Knight Fellowship, follow this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/ly2sr6>

New Articles

Amos Guiora has recently published two papers:

“International Law: Where Have we Been; Where are we Going”
(http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1428023);

abstract:

The need to operationalize international law from the perspective of the commander is, I suggest, an absolutely critical requirement of academics, policy-makers, human rights organizations, and military commanders (junior and senior alike). Otherwise, the commander will be stuck with yesterday’s rules in today’s - and tomorrow’s - conflict. The inherent unsuitability of these rules to the conflict will both make public international law increasingly irrelevant from the perspective of the single most important practitioners - the commanders - and will do a fundamental disservice to those who most critically need its protection - innocent civilians. The innocent civilian is entitled to international humanitarian law protections. That is obvious. If the individual is a combatant and therefore meets criteria to be defined as legitimate target then, all bets are off, with the caveat that the soldier must act when dealing with this combatant in accordance with the critical principles of international law: proportionality, alternatives, military necessity, and collateral damage. But what is the soldier to do when the scenario is in the hazy, foggy middle that defies easy categorization and classification? The extremes are easy, the middle is complicated. Classic international law and international humanitarian principles are clear with respect to the former; I suggest they are unhelpful regarding the latter. Unfortunately, operational counterterrorism is most complicated in the haze that is all but inevitable when facts are unclear, how is the soldier to act? Relying on time-honored principles developed in different operational contexts may not provide sufficient guidelines.

“Religious Extremism: A Fundamental Danger”
(http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1427998);

abstract:

Terrorism constitutes one of the gravest threats against democratic societies in the 21st century; in particular, religiously motivated terrorism. Why is this the case? There are many reasons. Religion is a powerful motivator for both positive social change and mass violence. It is a force in society that is difficult for many in a secular society to truly understand. It is an institution that is protected in civil society, whether by a state's own Constitution or international agreements.

Given that religious violence constitutes such a grave threat to democracies, governments must begin to examine this institution more critically than they have in the past. Governments are

charged not only with protecting civil liberties, like freedom of or from religion, but with protecting their citizens from internal and external threats. This Article discusses the framework modern democratic governments must begin to institute if they are to protect freedom of religion and effectively respond to a unique threat to safety. Five countries - the United States, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Israel and the Netherlands - will be examined. My primary thesis is that civil societies cannot afford to continue to treat religion as an "untouchable" subject - we must begin to understand what religion is in order to know when and how it may be appropriately limited for the benefit of society.

My New Article

"Regulating Hate and Racial Speech in Israel", *Cardozo Journal of International and Comparative Law*, Volume 17 (2009), pp. 101-110.

ABSTRACT

Israel is a Jewish democracy. It is founded on *Halacha* (Jewish law) and on liberal principles. While some segments of Jewish orthodoxy believe there is no room for freedom because all is dictated by the Almighty, liberal ideology is based on the tenets of freedom. While some segments of Jewish orthodoxy believe that all Jews are in the same boat, and must sink or swim together, liberalism believes in tolerance and in a "live and let live" attitude. The tension between the two basic foundations of Israel is noticeable and significant.

In this paper, I discuss the question whether the liberal State should prosecute people for preaching hate. After presenting both sides of argument, I argue that the State ought to weigh the costs of allowing hate speech as well as the risks involved, and balance these against the costs and risks to democracy and free speech censorship. Considering Israel's special circumstances, its legal framework, and recent trends following Israel's evacuation of the Gaza Strip I argue that in a perfect world we would respond to hate with education, not criminal laws. But our world is not perfect and history shows that hate speech might lead to horrible crimes. Therefore, legal intervention may be warranted to fight racism and bigotry. At the same time we should insist on satisfying some stringent requirements before we pursue the legal avenue. The law may be appropriate but only in significant rare circumstances.

As ever, I'd be happy to circulate my new article to interested parties.

New Books

Mercedes S. Hinton and Tim Newburn (eds.), *Policing Developing Democracies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).



There are enormous challenges in establishing policing systems in young democracies. Such societies typically have a host of unresolved pressing social, economic and political questions that impinge on policing and the prospects for reform. There are a series of hugely important questions arising in this context, to do with the emergence of the new security agenda, the

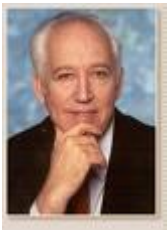
problems of transnational crime and international terrorism, the rule of law and the role of the police, security services and the military.

This is a field that is not only of growing academic interest but is now the focus of a very significant police reform 'industry'. Development agencies and entrepreneurs are involved around the globe in attempts to establish democratic police reforms in countries with little or no history of such activity. Consequently, there is a growing literature in this field, but as yet no single volume that brings together the central developments.

This book gathers together scholars from political science, international relations and criminology to focus on the issues raised by policing within developing democracies examining countries in Eastern Europe, Asia, South America and Africa.

Gad Yackobi, *Encounters in the Course of My Life* (Jerusalem: Carmel, 2009).

The book appears after Gad's premature death. In it, Gad tells his encounters and impressions of leaders he met and worked with, including David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Rabin, Henry Kissinger and Yigal Alon. As a poet, Gad had close contacts with some of Israel's most notable poets. Here he speaks of Dalia Rabikovitz, Yair Horowitz, and Nathan Yonathan.



I have accompanied this book, as Gad was writing it, debating which people to include, and in what light to present them. It is an interesting book that manifests the complex personality of Gad Yackobi: Intelligent, sensitive, restrained, calculated, a person of measured words and sharp eye, one who is acutely aware of people qualities (including his own) and deficiencies (including his own). Gad liked to quote from Heraclitus, "Character is destiny". By this he meant that he wished he could have behaved differently, but could not as his character did not allow him. With a more elastic conscience, and bolder elbows, Gad felt that he could have achieved higher than he did.

The book is dedicated to Gad's wife and friend, Esther Bachrach. I thank Esther for her continued friendship.

Israel in the Davis Cup Semi-Finals

On July 11, 2009, Israel won a place in the Davis Cup semifinals for the first time in history after completing a stunning victory over tennis giant Russia 3:0 in Tel Aviv.

First, Harel Levy won his game against Andreev who is ranked far above him. Levy, ranked 210 in the world, set the tone for the series when he upset world number 24 Igor Andreev, 6-4, 6-2, 4-6, 6-2.

Then Dudi Sela led Israel to a 2:0 lead after the first day of tennis. Sela, ranked 33 in the world, came from one set down to beat former world number eight Mikhail Youzhny, 3-6, 6-1, 6-0, 7-5.

The following day, doubles pair Andy Ram and Yoni Erlich closed out a 3-0 series sweep for Israel in its quarterfinal against Russia, defeating Marat Safin (former No. 1 player in the world) and Igor Kunitsyn in five sets, 6-3, 6-4, 6-7 (3), 4-6, 6-4.

Ram and Erlich, the 2008 Australian Open doubles champions, said the Davis Cup win was the biggest moment of their careers. "This is something I will cherish for all of my life," said Erlich.



Two-time Davis Cup winner Russia had made it to the semifinals in each of the past five years. In contrast, Israel had only reached the quarterfinals once before, losing to India in New Delhi in 1987.

Israel will play Spain, with Rafael Nadal, No.2 player in the world, away in the semifinals, which will take place on September 18-20. This might prove to be a too-high barrier to pass.

Alfred Hitchcock



One of my favourite directors is Alfred Hitchcock. I recently watched some of his (mostly) earlier films. **Juno and the Paycock** (1930) did not go into oblivion only because of its director. There are hardly signs of the man who knew his audience so well, knew how to thrill them, to evoke suspense, to frighten them.



Secret Agent (1936) is a far better film. The acting is not to the standard that we are used today, but we begin to notice the Hitchcock touch. The plot is interesting, with some twists that Hitch will develop further and master better later in his career.



Young and Innocent (1937) is about seemingly docile situation that blows up in a young man's face. While wandering the beach, he comes across the dead body of a woman he knew. As he runs to go get help, two ladies think he is running away from the body. As his trial proceeds, he is able to duck out in a rather unconvincing way and go on the lam with the charming daughter of the chief of police. With her help, they go to prove his innocence. The acting is not very convincing. The man behaves like James Bond, not like a normal person whose misfortune brought on him this rather scary business. The policemen are pathetic, a theme that Hitch will build up later in his films.



At the age of 5, Hitch's father called the police to teach him a lesson after he misbehaved. The policeman took his job rather seriously and locked young Hitch for a few minutes in a cell. This left quite an impression on Hitchcock and may explain the love/hate relationships he had with the police, evident in his films.

The main reason to watch this rather forgotten (for good reasons) film is Nova Pilbeam. She is simply delightful, captivating, a joy to watch.

Hitch returns to this theme of wrongly-accused person fighting for his innocence in **The Wrong Man** (1956) about a man is tried for crimes committed by a look-alike robber. This is a far better movie, with the legendary Henry Fonda who was, as ever, superb.

The Wrong Man is a serious film. You will notice that from the first moment, as Hitch presents the film in his own particular way. He stands in the dark, we don't see his face, only hear him saying that this is a true story, based on real facts that are hard to imagine, but yet true. From then on, the focus is on Fonda who carries the majority of the film on his shoulders. Hitch even avoided his usual cameo appearances as he did not wish us to distract even for a minute from the misfortunes of the wrongly-accused man.



Henry Fonda, one of Hollywood all-time greatest actors, plays musician Manny Balestrero, a man who leads a quiet life with his wife and two boys, when one day he is believed to be a serial armed robber. Manny is arrested and charged with the crimes. He is identified by several

witnesses, and his life break apart. Fonda is quiet, contained, submissive, in a place where he does not belong, playing in accordance to rules he does not understand. When he is able to somehow collect himself, his wife Rose (Vera Miles), so terribly distraught by the ordeal, loses her sanity.

Jamaica Inn (1939) is a pirate adventure based on a soapy gothic tale by Daphne du Maurier. It is about a beautiful young woman who arrived at the evil Jamaica Inn. The inn is the hiding place for a band of pirates who lure ships unto the rocks, murder the crew, and pillage. The head of the organization is Charles Laughton at his pompous, dark best. He is in control of every scene, overacting and winking at the audience. The young woman is caught up in her trust for this man, and finds herself in his clutches by the end of the movie. The dark side of Hitchcock is very apparent.



Charles Laughton and Maureen O'Hara star in this film. Indeed, it was the first O'Hara film (she was eighteen year-old at the time) and here already we notice her acting qualities. Laughton was never one of my favourite actors. He marveled in playing loathsome characters. No reason to like him in this film where he plays an especially ugly, ostentatious, and evil character.

Jamaica Inn was Hitch's last British picture before he moved to Los Angeles, and one of his most successful. In March 1939, Hitchcock moved to Hollywood to begin his contract with the powerful David O. Selznick.

Notorious (1946) is a brilliant allegory of love and betrayal, where Hitchcock fuses two of his favorite themes: suspense and romance. A beautiful woman with a tainted past (Ingrid Bergman) is enlisted by American agent Devlin (Cary Grant) to spy on a ring of Nazis in post-war Rio. Her espionage work becomes life-threatening after events force her to marry one of the leaders of the Nazi ring, Alex (Claude Rains). Only Devlin can rescue her, but to do so he must face his role in her desperate situation and acknowledge that he has loved her all this time, something that the macho Grant was reluctant to do. But the knight on the white horse finally arrives in the last moment to rescue the poor and stunningly beautiful Bergman from the Nazi poisonous husband. As we say in Hebrew, Ba LeZion Goel.



The main reason to watch this film is undoubtedly Bergman. Every moment of her on the screen is a joy to watch. Her performance is unforgettable, conveying much more with her eyes and subtle facial expressions than with words. Hitchcock enjoyed such a privileged position that he could choose almost any actor for any role in his films, and he chose the best.

The Paradine Case (1947) stands as a rare Hitchcock courtroom drama. It is one of the Hitch-Selznick films, where Selznick also wrote the script. A beautiful woman Maddalena Anna

Paradine (played by Alida Valli) stands accused of murdering her wealthy, blind husband. She enlists the aid of renowned lawyer Anthony Keane (Gregory Peck). As they prepare her defense, the chemistry between the two begins to heat up. And as his emotions for Mrs. Paradine grow stronger, Keane grows more convinced of her innocence. The case will be a difficult one, however, as the judge (Charles Laughton, again) is no friend of Keane's; the Queen's prosecutor, played by the excellent Leo G. Carroll, is a serious foe; and only an inspired defense will have any chance of clearing Mrs. Paradine. Only after a series of stunning upsets does Keane realize that, for the first time in his career, he has allowed his heart to rule his head. In a typically perverse Hitchcockian development, the film's most unpleasant character (as usual), an autocratic, vindictive judge played by Laughton, is one of the few who can see through Anna's facade. A small fortune was invested to construct an exact replica of the Old Bailey courtroom for the court scenes.

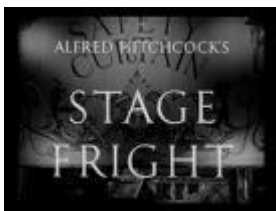


Peck is one of my all-time favourites. I regard him as one of the very greatest but his American accent sometimes seemed odd, misfit in the Old Bailey courtroom. Yet Peck is still a great actor, and I LOVE court room dramas.

The film was a box-office disappointment, spelling the end of the always-rocky association between Hitch and the mighty Selznick. Hitch wanted Greta Garbo to play Anna Paradine, and indeed a screen test was filmed, but Garbo ultimately declined. Hitch also wanted to cast Laurence Olivier or Ronald Colman as Anthony Keane, but Selznick asserted his power as studio head to insist that Hitchcock use Peck.

Stage Fright (1950) is another crime film, revolving around theatre (a special venue for Hitchcock), with a very strong cast, including Jane Wyman, Marlene Dietrich, Michael Wilding and Richard Todd. Hitchcock's daughter Patricia made her movie debut in this film.

Though Hitchcock had lived and worked in Hollywood since 1939, this thriller was filmed on location in London, and all the cast, with the exception of Wyman and Dietrich, were British.



The film is about a murder, police investigation of the murder, while the two murderers trying to evade punishment, and one of them (Dietrich) tries to implicate the other (Todd), who is terribly in love with Dietrich thus incapable to see what is going on. To his help comes Wyman, who loves him and is determined to help. She does more than her fare share trying to save Todd, and in the process falls in love with the charming police detective (Wilding). The plot includes many Hitch humorous hints so as to tell the viewers not to take the story very seriously. Hitch is showing in this film yet again his ingenuity, starting the film with a false flashback, which leads the spectator to think that Dietrich was the sole murderer.

Topaz (1969) Adapting from his own bestseller, Leon Uris wrote the original screenplay for this cold war spy story. Alfred Hitchcock asked for a rewrite by Samuel Taylor, who had proven experience in writing complex plots; he worked with him on *Vertigo*, but this long and sometimes tiring movie still contains far too much plot, too many explanations, and not enough character depth to bring this lukewarm thriller to life. Shot around the globe with a cosmopolitan, if not particularly starry, cast (Frederick Stafford, John Vernon, Michel Piccoli, Philippe Noiret, John Forsythe, Dany Robin, Karin Dor, Roscoe Lee Browne), the action centres on the Cuban Missile Crisis and the presence of double agents in the French secret service, one collaborates closely with the USA, and two others with the Russians.



Some of the scenes are hard to believe. I sincerely hope that the secret agencies around the world conduct their affairs more professionally. Hitch preferred to shoot many of the street scenes in the studio and this is noticeable. Everyone speaks very good English, including the French and the Cubans; this hardly helps the film's credibility. When the film was done, prescreening were held and the audience was very negative in its reaction, saying that the film was dull, poor, bad, hardly a Hitch movie, asking to shorten the film (the film was shortened by some 30 minutes but it is still far too long) and to change the ending scene! Hitchcock eventually shot three different endings for an average film of his Hollywood career. The DVD contains all three final scenes, one of them made it to the film.

Gems of the Month

David Broza

In a special concert in Tel Aviv, Broza celebrated 25 years to his smash mid-Eighties record *HaIsha She'Etee* (The Woman by My Side), inviting artists (Yehonathan Gafen, Yael Levy, Yasmin Levy and others) who accompanied his career. For two hours, Broza sang his best songs while communicating with the full-house audience. At the end of the concert, before the encores, a representative of the Spanish Embassy came on stage and honoured Broza with an Order of Merit Medal, for his continued work in bringing together the Spanish and Israeli music cultures, and furthering Spanish music in Israel. It was a moving evening, with many magical moments.



See <http://www.davidbroza.net/hp/>

Havdala



Shmuel Hasfari is my beloved Israeli playwright. He has the ability to reflect on fascinating facets of the Israeli society with sensitivity and humour and his last play, Havdalah ("Separation", a ceremony that marks the symbolic end of Shabbat and holidays, and ushers in the new week) is the best play I have seen this year.



Hasfari also wrote "Kiddush", "Shivaa", "Hamets", "Acordionim", "Tashmad" and "Milano". His play "The Master of the House" (In Hebrew: "Eeshah. Ba-al. Bayit.") 2003 Award-winner for Best Play in Israel, received its American Premiere at the Laguna Playhouse in March 2007, directed by Richard Stein. Slowly but surely, Hasfari has established himself as one of the most talented playwrights in our history.

Tel Aviv Promenade



Beautiful as ever, busy and lively. French is spoken as frequently as Hebrew. This year I noticed other languages as well: Italian, French, Portuguese, English, American, German, Spanish. The bustling promenade is my favourite place on earth. Thanks to Glia and Assaf Ofek, who welcomed us into their home, perfectly situated 7 minutes walk from the Frishman Beach, I was able to start many of my days swimming, reading, relaxing and walking on the beach. Saturday morning, 8 a.m., the stunning promenade is livelier than the peak hours of the busiest streets of Hull and Beverley, combined.

Lighter Side

A person comes to his rabbi, excited and most troubled.

"What happened?" Asked the rabbi.

"My wife is poisoning me", answered the man.

"That's terrible", said the rabbi. "How do you know?"

"I am telling you", answered the man. "I know. She is poisoning me".

